

The Express

The most free nation?

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Which nation is the freest? A recent letter writer attempted to answer that question, but he did not use quantifiable measures to justify his answer, which is the United States of America. His justification can be simply stated because the Bill of Rights and the Constitution say so. A while back, Mr. Phil Underwood attempted to answer that question by saying that you measure it by the fact that the United States has the highest standard of living in the world. I found that was not true via several indexes that measure standard of living based on various components. The U.S. did not even rank in the top 5 or ten; the highest ranking they got was like 16th.

There are many indexes out there from many organizations, research studies and government reviews to search through. The Heritage Foundation measures economic freedoms which are released in their Index of Economic Freedoms which looks at many nations and use 12 different economic factors to give their rankings. By the way, the U.S. ranked 12th, Hong Kong ranks first. The Human Freedom Index uses 79 indicators of personal, civil, political and economic freedoms. This index is co-published by the Cato Institute, the Fraser Institute and the Liberales Institute at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. The U.S. ranks 23 on the list of 159 nations and Hong Kong ranks on the top along with Switzerland. Like I said there are many other indexes available and they all use different indicators to measure freedoms.

So the United States is not on the very top but it is pretty much very free in comparison to other nations and for a variety of reasons. All that these indexes indicate is that there is room for improvement when it comes to freedoms and rights in the U.S.; we cannot rest on our laurels. We may have slipped in the ranking but we are far from out of it. We may not be the freest nation but we most definitely are one of the freest around the world. We are in real good company when you come down to it. It feels real good to know that our love of rights and freedom have influence many other nations to emulate the U.S.